Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1 through 45 have been canceled. Claims 46 through 57 are allowed. Claims 58-81 have been added. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. Please enter these claims as presented. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-45 (Canceled)

46. (Original) A method of encoding acknowledgement channels in base stations of a wireless communication system, the method comprising:

receiving a reverse link traffic channel data frame from a remote terminal;

allowing absence of acknowledgement (ACK) signals on an acknowledgement channel of a best base station to indicate that quality of the received data frame is good;

allowing absence of negative acknowledgement (NAK) signals on acknowledgement channels of secondary base stations to indicate that quality of the received data frame is bad;

encoding the ACK signals and the NAK signals, and transmitting the encoded signals on the acknowledgement channels during a switching period.

47. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the switching period is configured as a duration of a soft-handoff.

48. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the best base station is selected based on forward link channel quality.

49. (Original) The method of claim 48, wherein the forward link channel quality includes a strongest forward link pilot signal detected by a remote terminal.

50. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the best base station is selected based on reverse link power control information.

51. (Original) The method of claim 50, wherein the reverse link power control information includes power control (PC) commands.

52. (Original) The method of claim 51, further comprising:

enabling the remote terminal to determine that a base station is the best base station if a difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a first threshold.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52, further comprising:

enabling a base station to determine that it is the best base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a second threshold.

54. (Original) The method of claim 53, wherein the second threshold is larger than the first threshold.

55. (Original) The method of claim 54, further comprising:

enabling a base station to determine that it is the secondary base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is below a third threshold.

56. (Original) The method of claim 55, wherein the third threshold is smaller than the first threshold.

57. (Original) The method of claim 55, further comprising:

transmitting both ACK and NAK signals explicitly if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is above the third threshold but is below the second threshold.

58. (New)   An apparatus for wireless communication comprising::

means for receiving a reverse link traffic channel data frame from a remote terminal;

means for allowing absence of acknowledgement (ACK) signals on an acknowledgement channel of a best base station to indicate that quality of the received data frame is good;

means for allowing absence of negative acknowledgement (NAK) signals on acknowledgement channels of secondary base stations to indicate that quality of the received data frame is bad;

means for encoding the ACK signals and the NAK signals, and transmitting the encoded signals on the acknowledgement channels during a switching period.

59. (New)   The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the switching period is configured as a duration of a soft-handoff.

60. (New)   The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the best base station is selected based on forward link channel quality.

61. (New)   The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the forward link channel quality includes a strongest forward link pilot signal detected by a remote terminal.

62. (New)   The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the best base station is selected based on reverse link power control information.

63. (New)   The apparatus of claim 62, wherein the reverse link power control information includes power control (PC) commands.

64. (New)   The apparatus of claim 63, further comprising:

means for enabling the remote terminal to determine that a base station is the best base station if a difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a first threshold.

65. (New)   The apparatus of claim 64, further comprising:

means for enabling a base station to determine that it is the best base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a second threshold.

66. (New) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the second threshold is larger than the first threshold.

67. (New) The apparatus of claim 66, further comprising:

means for enabling a base station to determine that it is the secondary base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is below a third threshold.

68. (New) The method of claim 67, wherein the third threshold is smaller than the first threshold.

69. (New) The method of claim 67, further comprising:

transmitting both ACK and NAK signals explicitly if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is above the third threshold but is below the second threshold.

70. (New) A computer-readable storage device containing instructions for executing the following steps:

receiving a reverse link traffic channel data frame from a remote terminal;

allowing absence of acknowledgement (ACK) signals on an acknowledgement channel of a best base station to indicate that quality of the received data frame is good;

allowing absence of negative acknowledgement (NAK) signals on acknowledgement channels of secondary base stations to indicate that quality of the received data frame is bad;

encoding the ACK signals and the NAK signals, and transmitting the encoded signals on the acknowledgement channels during a switching period.

71. (New) The computer-readable storage device of claim 70, wherein the switching period is configured as a duration of a soft-handoff.

72. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 70, wherein the best base station is selected based on forward link channel quality.

73. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 72, wherein the forward link channel quality includes a strongest forward link pilot signal detected by a remote terminal.

74. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 70, wherein the best base station is selected based on reverse link power control information.

75. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 74, wherein the reverse link power control information includes power control (PC) commands.

76. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 75, further comprising instructions for executing the following steps:

enabling the remote terminal to determine that a base station is the best base station if a difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a first threshold.

77. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 76, further comprising instructions for executing the following steps:

enabling a base station to determine that it is the best base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a second threshold.

78. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 77, wherein the second threshold is larger than the first threshold.

79. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 78, further comprising instructions for executing the following steps:

enabling a base station to determine that it is the secondary base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is below a third threshold.

80. (New)   The computer-readable storage device of claim 79, wherein the third threshold is smaller than the first threshold.

81. (New)   The computer-readable storage device, further comprising instructions for executing the following steps:

transmitting both ACK and NAK signals explicitly if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is above the third threshold but is below the second threshold.